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CHILLING

TALES OF HORROR

AUGUST 1971

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 4

THE SOUL COLLECTORS 4

All of us are marked for death, but only one in a million have met the demons and survived. Because even to know their faces is to risk instant annihilation

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An actors ghost was running loose inside the theater, threatening the lives of anyone who dared to mock the curse he had placed upon it

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Buffalo, New York, an unlikely spot for ghosts—but hundreds there have seen the spirit of President McKinley who walks the streets each September 6th

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In a duel to the death, a writer matched his wits and his soul with the foulest creatures of Satan

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A man falls from a building--"Suicide!" reads the police report! An auto strikes a woman--"Accidental death!" says the newspaper! But--perhaps they're **WRONG**! Perhaps **EVERY** death is known in advance--is **PLANNED**-- by someone! Who can deny it? Can you-- after reading the shock-filled story of...

The SOUL COLLECTORS



NO! YOU **CAN'T** TAKE HIM! I WON'T LET YOU!

HIS NAME IS IN THE **BOOK**! HE IS MARKED FOR **DEATH**!

GAL CRAIG WAS HURRYING TO A DISTANT COLLEGE-- TO WATCH HIS SWEETHEART RECEIVE HER LAW DEGREE! THE BLEAK, DISMAL NIGHT DIDN'T HELP MATTERS--

WONDER HOW IT'LL BE-- MARRIED TO A LADY LAWYER? SHE'LL PROBABLY WIN ALL THE ARGUMENTS! OH-OH! THE MOTOR'S SPUTTERING-- MUST BE OUT OF GAS!



UNPLEASANT, YES-- BUT NOT TERRIFYING ... NOT **YET**!

ACCORDING TO THE MAP, THERE'S A TOWN CLOSE BY! I CAN TAKE A SHORT CUT-- THROUGH THIS CEMETERY-- AND BUY SOME GAS THERE!



THE WALK TO TOWN WAS WET AND LONELY-- BUT PASSED WITHOUT INCIDENT! UPON REACHING THE TOWN NEARBY--

CAME THROUGH THE GRAVEYARD, EH? YOU WOULDN'T CATCH ME THERE ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS!

SEEMED PRETTY SAFE! AFTER ALL, EVERYBODY IN IT WAS DEAD!

ON THE WAY BACK, CAL'S GRIM HUMOR RECEIVED A RUDE SHOCK AS--

WHAT THE--! WHO ARE YOU?

COME-- THE TIME APPROACHES!

IN THE BLACK-SHROUDED NIGHT--

HURRY--WE'LL BE LATE FOR THE MEETING!

NOW LOOK HERE, YOU-- WHAT MEETING? WHO ARE YOU? -- I CAN'T SEE YOUR FACE!

A STRANGE INTRUDER-- A MYSTERIOUS COMMAND-- AND BEFORE CAL COULD REGAIN HIS WITS, HE FOUND HIMSELF CONFRONTED BY A GRIM SIGHT!

GOOD-- WE'RE IN TIME!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT?

AND NOW-- I WILL READ THE NAMES OF THOSE TO BE COLLECTED TOMORROW! FIRST-- **SIMON BENNETT!** SECOND--

THEN, CAL MADE A FATAL ERROR--

LOOK-- I'M IN A HURRY-- TELL ME WHERE ROUTE 60 IS, AND--

GREAT SCOTT-- THAT FACE!

A MORTAL! HERE-- AMONG US!

THE EFFECT WAS ELECTRIC! THE MONSTROUS BEINGS RUSHED AT CAL-- THEIR FLESHLESS FACES RADIATING HORROR!

INTRUDER-- YOU MUST PAY WITH YOUR LIFE!

YES, BUT NOT THAT WAY! HE HAS WITNESSED THE FORBIDDEN RITES-- BRING HIM HERE!

BUT CAL, NOW FULLY ALERT, SWUNG THE HEAVY GAS CAN-- THE MUSCLES OF AN ALL-AMERICAN TACKLE BEHIND IT!

I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE-- EXCEPT AWAY FROM HERE!

WHAM!



THEN-- A MAD RACE FOR LIFE-- AGAINST LIVING DEATH-- WHILE THE BLOOD BEAT IN HIS TEMPLES AND TERROR COURSED THROUGH HIS VEINS!

THANK HEAVENS! THE CAR-- AT LAST!

HURRY! AFTER HIM!



A MOMENT TO EMPTY THE CAN-- A FRENZIED GETAWAY!--

LET HIM GO! HE CANNOT ESCAPE--HE IS MARKED FOR COLLECTION!



Still SHAKING, CAL REJOICED AT HIS NARROW ESCAPE--

THOSE-- **THINGS!** THEY WERE DEAD! I... I'M LUCKY TO BE **ALIVE!**



AN HOUR LATER--

WHEW! FINALLY MADE IT! THERE'S THE COLLEGE AHEAD-- AND SELMA-- WILL I BE GLAD TO SEE HER!



AS CAL STEPPED FROM HIS CAR--

L-LOOK! THAT FACE!

GREAT SCOTT!



WHAT'S **WRONG** WITH THOSE TWO? WHAT'RE THEY **STARING** AT?



FROM A NEARBY MIRROR--THE
HEART STOPPING ANSWER!



I... I CAN'T FACE SELMA--
LIKE **THIS!** I'VE GOT TO
GET TO A HOTEL -- I'VE
GOT TO **THINK!**



AT THAT MOMENT--

CAL'S PROBABLY IN THE
AUDIENCE-- BET HE'S
PROUD OF ME!



BUT BY THE NEXT DAY--

HE WASN'T THERE-- AND HE
STILL HASN'T COME TO DRIVE
ME HOME! MAYBE HE DOESN'T
CARE FOR ME ANYMORE -- BUT
MAYBE-- MAYBE HE'S HAD AN
ACCIDENT!



THANKS,
MISS!

OH, IT'S FROM CAL! "MEET
ME AT THE REGENT
HOTEL-- HURRY!"



A SWIFT CAB RIDE--THEN--

CAL-- MY DARLING!
I **KNEW** YOU'D HAD
AN ACCIDENT!

HOW CAN I
TELL HER THE
TRUTH? HOW?



Was EVER A MIND SO TORN BY ANGUISH--
SO TORTURED BY INDECISION?

SWEETHEART--IT WASN'T
AN ACCIDENT!

N-NOT AN
ACCIDENT?
THEN
WHAT?



SICK AT HEART, CAL RELATED THE WHOLE GRUESOMELY INCREDIBLE STORY--

... AND NOW I'VE CHANGED TO SOMETHING NO HUMAN CAN BEAR EVEN TO LOOK UPON!

BUT, CAL-- YOU'RE WRONG! I'M NOT AFRAID-- I LOVE YOU!

I WANT TO LOOK AT YOU! REMOVE THOSE BANDAGES!

HE PROTESTED IN VAIN-- AND FINALLY, WHEN HIS UNSPEAKABLY HIDEOUS FACE WAS BARED--

OH-- I KNOW-- IT'S GHASTLY! DON'T TORTURE YOURSELF THIS WAY, SWEETHEART! GO-- LEAVE ME! I... I'LL UNDERSTAND!

BUT WHO CAN PREDICT THE DEPTH OF A WOMAN'S LOVE?

MAYBE THIS IS A TEST OF OUR LOVE, DARLING! BUT **NOTHING** COULD EVER DRIVE ME AWAY FROM YOU! I-- I COULDN'T LIVE -- WITHOUT YOU!

OH, SELMA DARLING-- NOW YOU'VE GIVEN ME **HOPE!**

AS CAL'S HEART QUICKENED WITH NEW-FOUND COURAGE -- HIS EYE FELL UPON THE PAPER SELMA HAD BROUGHT!

SIMON BENNETT! HOLY SMOKE-- THAT'S ONE OF THE NAMES THAT CREATURE READ OFF IN THE CEMETERY!

FURANTICALLY, HE TURNED TO THE OBITUARY PAGE -- AND A SURGE OF DREAD FROZE HIS BLOOD!

ALL OF THESE NAMES WERE READ -- FOR TODAY'S COLLECTION! THEY ALL DIED TODAY!

BUT-- WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

I DON'T KNOW-- BUT I INTEND TO FIND OUT! BUT FIRST I MUST GET SOME REST-- I NEED TIME TO MAKE PLANS!

ALL RIGHT, DARLING-- BUT I'LL SEE YOU LATER-- WITHOUT FAIL!



ONLY BRIEF MOMENTS PASSED BEFORE THERE WAS A BOLD KNOCK AT CAL'S DOOR! AFTER DARKENING THE ROOM TO CONCEAL HIS FACE--

Y-YOU! YOU'RE ONE OF THE GHOULS FROM THE CEMETERY!

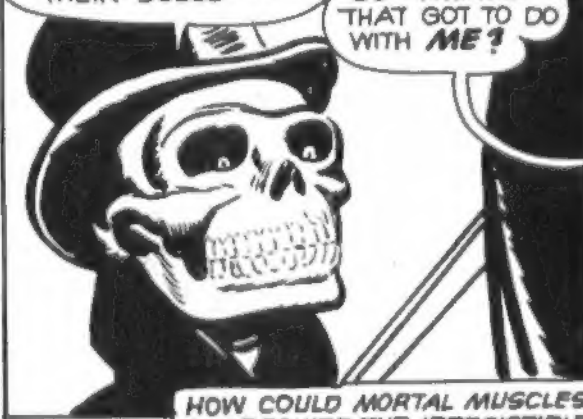
GHOULS? YOU ARE BADLY IN ERROR! PERHAPS I SHOULD EXPLAIN!



IT HAD COME-- THE FINAL STAGE OF SICKENING HORROR--

LAST NIGHT, YOU INTERRUPTED A MEETING OF THE **SOUL COLLECTORS** FOR THIS DISTRICT! EACH NIGHT, CERTAIN UNFORTUNATES ARE MARKED FOR DEATH! NEXT DAY, WE COLLECT THEIR SOULS---

SO-- WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH **ME**?



HOW COULD MORTAL MUSCLES OVERPOWER THE IRRESISTIBLE STRENGTH OF A CREATURE FROM THE **BEYOND**? AFTER A SWIFT COUNTERATTACK--

WITH A SUDDEN LUNGE--

I GOT AWAY FROM YOU ONCE-- I CAN DO IT AGAIN!

I REPEAT-- LET US GO!

HAVING SEEN OUR RITUAL, FORBIDDEN TO THE LIVING-- YOU ARE AUTOMATICALLY **DOOMED!** NOW-- LET US GO!

NO-- I WON'T!



Y-YES! BUT-- LET-- GO! YOU'RE-- **STRANGLING** ME!

UNEXPECTEDLY--

WHA--? WHO IS **THIS**?

SELMA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE-- **NOW**?

I PASSED THIS--THIS CREATURE IN THE HALL, SO I CAME BACK --AND HEARD **EVERYTHING!**



IT HAS BEEN SAID--"EVEN THE DEVIL QUAILS BEFORE AN ANGRY WOMAN!" BUT HERE WAS AN ANGRY WOMAN WHO WAS ALSO-- A **LAWYER!**

YOU HAVE NO **LEGAL** RIGHT TO TAKE THIS MAN'S SOUL! I **INSIST** ON ARGUING MY CLIENT'S CASE!

THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO COME BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY AND SPEAK TO OUR LEADER! BUT MY TASK IS TO BRING THE VICTIM IN-- AND THAT I SHALL DO!



IT WAS THE MOST BIZARRE TRIAL EVER HELD! A SPIRITED GIRL AGAINST-- SUPERNATURAL SPIRITS!

THIS IS MOST IRREGULAR-- BUT THE DEFENSE MAY PROCEED!

YOUR HONOR-- I CLAIM THAT THE PUNISHMENT IS TOO GREAT! MY CLIENT CAME TO YOUR MEETING BY **ACCIDENT!**

BUT THE SPECTRAL PROSECUTOR, BACKED BY CENTURIES OF EXPERIENCE, PROVED A WORTHY FOE!

HA! **MANY** MEN MEET DEATH BY ACCIDENT! BESIDES, HE HAD NO **RIGHT** IN THE CEMETERY AT NIGHT-- THUS TRESPASSING ON THE REALM OF DEPARTED SOULS!

IT IS FITTING THAT HE **JOIN** THEM!

WELL SPOKEN! HAS THE DEFENSE ANYTHING TO ADD?

OHH! I'VE GOT TO THINK **FAST**-- OR--

WAIT! YOU SAID YOU COULD COLLECT ONLY THOSE SOULS **MARKED** FOR DEATH **IN THIS BOOK!** MY CLIENT'S NAME IS **NOT** HERE FOR TODAY'S COLLECTION-- THEREFORE-- **YOU CAN'T TAKE HIM!**

WHAT? LET **ME** SEE THAT BOOK!

THERE, HIS NAME HAS ALREADY BEEN ADDED! YOU SEE-- HE HAS BEEN **TOUCHED** BY A SOUL COLLECTOR-- THUS HE **MUST** DIE! EVEN I CANNOT SAVE HIM!

THEN I... I'VE **LOST!** I'VE LOST **EVERYTHING!** CAL MEANS MORE TO ME THAN LIFE ITSELF!

AS THE LOVERS PARTED **TENDERLY--**

I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU, SWEETHEART-- **ALWAYS!**

AND I YOU-- FOR ALL **ETERNITY!**

WAS THE GHOSTLY JUDGE'S DEAD HEART STIRRED BY SOMETHING AKIN TO **PITY--** AS HE WROTE **ANOTHER** NAME IN THE BOOK OF THOSE MARKED FOR DEATH **THE NEXT DAY?**

John Foster
Mary Simms
Cal Craig
Selma Jones

AND SO-- CAL MET HIS FATE! BUT IT WAS NOT A GRIM ONE-- FOR AS HE PASSED OVER THE THIN BARRIER BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH, HE REGAINED HIS YOUTH-- AND THE PROMISE OF **ETERNAL** HAPPINESS WITH HIS BELOVED! FOR ONCE IN THE **BEYOND**, CAL LEARNED OF THE GHOSTLY JUDGES ACT-- AND HE HAD ONLY TO WAIT--

SELMA SAID SHE COULDN'T **LIVE** WITHOUT ME-- AND SHE **MEANT** IT! SHE'LL JOIN ME HERE SOON-- AND THEN WE'LL BE **TOGETHER-- FOREVER!**

The End

HAUNTED HAMLET



MANY ARE THE STRANGE AND WONDERFUL TALES WHICH HAVE BEEN KEPT ALIVE DOWN THE CENTURIES BY THE THEATRE! BUT THE MOST GRIPPING OF ALL STORIES IS THAT OF THE THEATRE ITSELF-- THAT EXTRAORDINARY PROFESSION WHICH IS HAUNTED BY LEGENDS OF GRIM EVENTS AND ACTORS LONG SINCE DEAD! HERE'S A WEIRD, PULSE- STOPPING TALE OF ONE OF THE THEATRE'S MOST FANTASTIC PERFORMANCES-- THAT OF...

'HAUNTED HAMLET'!

GO BACK, BACK--OR SHE DIES!

THIS MYSTIC SYMBOL-- IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE TO STOP HIM!



IT WAS A HAPPY DAY WHEN TOMMY BEAL, BRILLIANT YOUNG DIRECTOR, BOUGHT A LONG-CLOSED THEATRE--

IT'S ALL YOURS, SON-- AND GOOD LUCK!

THANKS-- I'LL NEED IT!



YEARS OF EFFORT AND SACRIFICE HAD BROUGHT TOMMY'S LIFELONG AMBITION CLOSE TO FULFILLMENT! NOW, AS THE ACTUAL WORK BEGAN ON HIS PRODUCTION OF SHAKE-SPEARE'S "HAMLET"--

SURE, I NEED A STAGE DOOR-MAN! YOU'RE HIRED!

THANK YOU! BUT FIRST-- I MUST WARN YOU!



LAUGH IF YOU WISH, BUT THIS THEATRE IS HAUNTED-- BY A FIENDISH SPIRIT!

HUH? TELL ME MORE, TODD-- I CAN USE A LITTLE COMIC RELIEF!



IN A VOICE FRAUGHT WITH DREAD, THE OLD MAN TOLD HIS STORY: "A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, THE FIRST PLAY GIVEN AT THIS THEATRE WAS "HAMLET"! AN AMBITIOUS YOUNG ACTOR WAS SCHEDULED TO STAR, BUT AT THE LAST MOMENT--"

I'M SORRY, CARTER, BUT WE'VE DECIDED YOU'RE TOO INEXPERIENCED FOR THE ROLE! SO WE'VE ENGAGED A FAMOUS EUROPEAN ACTOR TO TAKE YOUR PLACE!

B-BUT YOU CAN'T! THIS PLAY MEANT-- EVERYTHING TO ME!

"CARTER WAS HEARTBROKEN, AND IN A FIT OF DEPRESSION--"

IT-- IS-- DONE! BUT BEFORE I DIE-- I RESOLVE-- NO PLAY WILL EVER-- BE PERFORMED HERE-- EVEN-- IF I MUST-- RETURN FROM THE GRAVE!



"THE ANGRY WORDS OF A DYING MAN? PERHAPS? BUT HALFWAY THROUGH THE FIRST PERFORMANCE--"

TO BE-- OR NOT TO BE-- THAT IS THE QUESTION!--

THE FOOL-- HE SHALL SOON HAVE HIS ANSWER!

THUD!

GREAT SCOTT!



"AN ACCIDENT? SO EVERYONE THOUGHT-- THE FIRST TIME! BUT, THROUGH THE YEARS, MORE GRISLY "ACCIDENTS" OCCURRED, AND WHEN THE SPECTRE FINALLY SHOWED HIMSELF-- THE FRIGHTFUL TRUTH BECAME KNOWN--"

"EVENTUALLY, THE THEATRE WAS CLOSED--"

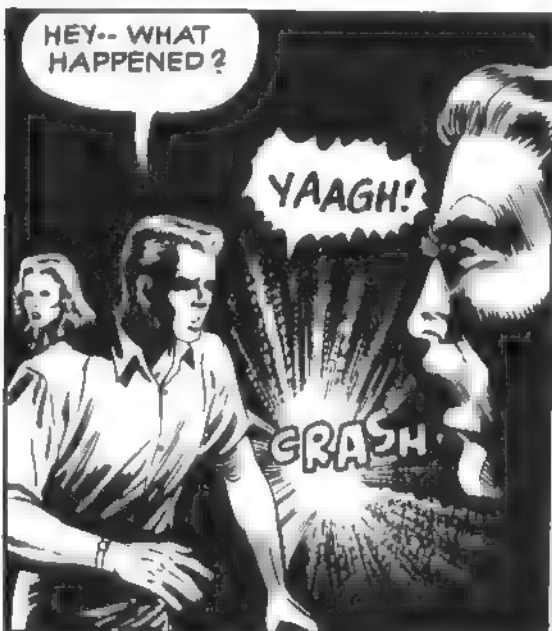
IT'S ABOUT TIME-- AFTER EIGHT MURDERS!

AS THE STORY ENDED--

AND NOW-- YOU HAVE BOUGHT IT! BUT WITH IT, YOU BUY DISASTER! FOR THE VENGEFUL GHOST STILL HAUNTS THE SHADOWS OF THIS EVIL HALL!

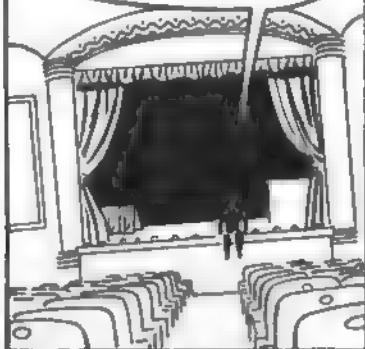
IT'S THE GHOST OF JULES CARTER-- I RECOGNIZE HIM!





That NIGHT, ON THE DARKENED STAGE, A LONELY FIGURE BROODED--

ONE MORE ACCIDENT AND THE WHOLE CAST WILL QUIT! I CAN'T BLAME 'EM-- BUT IF THEY DO, I'M RUINED!



YOU STARTLED ME, TODD-- WHY ARE YOU STILL HANGING AROUND?

I'VE COME TO TELL YOU SOMETHING-- HOW TO DEFEAT THE GHOST!



YEAH? WELL, LET'S HEAR IT-- I'LL TRY ANYTHING TO CLEAR UP THIS MESS!

FIRST, YOU MUST BARGAIN WITH HIM! LISTEN--



At THAT MOMENT, CARRIE ENTERED THE THEATRE-- TO FALL PREY TO LURKING HORROR!

IT'S NOT HEALTHY FOR TOMMY TO HANG AROUND THIS DISMAL PLACE, WORRYING SO! I'LL CHEER HIM UP---

With A SUDDEN LUNGE--

HA! YOU WILL BE MY NEXT VICTIM!

OH-HH! T-TOMMY! -- HELP!



In THE NEXT MOMENT-- AS THE MUFFLED SCREAM STILL ECHOED--

GREAT GUNS-- IT'S THE GHOST! AND HE'S HEADED FOR THE CATWALK-- WITH CARRIE!

HIGH ABOVE THE STAGE, AS A DRAMA OF TERRIFYING REALITY UNFOLDED--

FOOLS-- YOU'RE TOO LATE! SHE MUST DIE!



YE GODS-- IT'S A FIFTY-FOOT DROP!



Suddenly, OLD TODD'S GNARLED FINGERS TWISTED INTO A MYSTERIOUS SYMBOL --

Miraculously, CARRIE WAS SPARED-- AND THE GHOST, THWARTED, BEGAN TO VANISH--



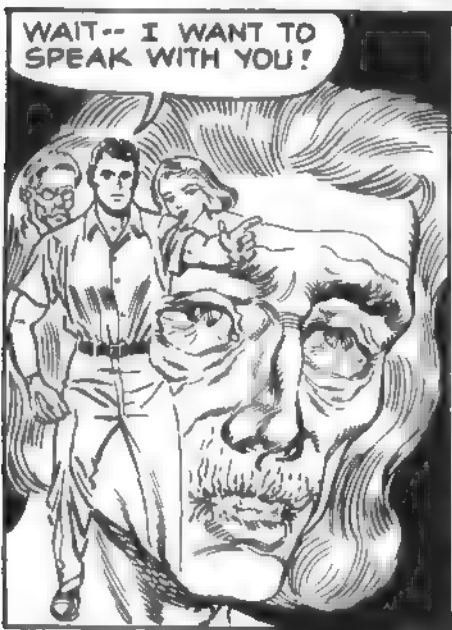
STOP! DON'T HARM HER! SHE IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE THEATRE!

TODD--YOU! BUT YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO INTERFERE!



OH, TOMMY-- IT WAS AWFUL!

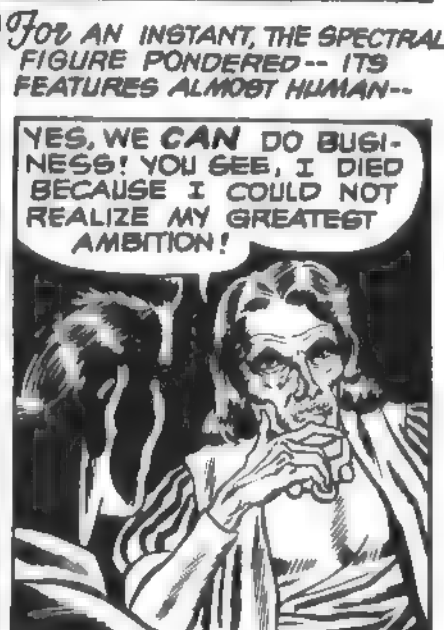
HMM-- I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY THE GHOST WAS SO AFRAID OF TODD-- BUT MAYBE I CAN BARGAIN WITH HIM, TOO -- NOW!



WAIT-- I WANT TO SPEAK WITH YOU!



WHAT MUST I DO TO LIFT THIS AWFUL CURSE?



FOR AN INSTANT, THE SPECTRAL FIGURE PONDERED-- ITS FEATURES ALMOST HUMAN--

YES, WE CAN DO BUSINESS! YOU SEE, I DIED BECAUSE I COULD NOT REALIZE MY GREATEST AMBITION!



I WILL LIFT THE CURSE-- IF YOU LET ME PLAY HAMLET!



A fantastic PROPOSITION-- BUT THERE COULD BE ONLY ONE ANSWER...

DO IT, TOMMY! IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO PREVENT MORE BLOOD-SHED!

OKAY-- IT'S A DEAL!

GOOD! THEN FAREWELL-- UNTIL OPENING NIGHT!

NEXT DAY, TOMMY TOLD THE CAST OF THE NIGHT'S AWESOME INCIDENTS--

IT'LL BE A TERRIFYING BUSINESS FOR US ALL-- BUT WE MUST DO AS THE GHOST SAYS!

GOSH-- AND I THOUGHT THIS WAS ALL A PUBLICITY STUNT!



Opening NIGHT! THE AUDIENCE WAS GAY, EXPECTANT! BACKSTAGE--

JUST WAIT'LL THEY SEE THE LEADING MAN-- THEY'LL BE SCARED OUT OF THEIR WITS!



THE MOMENTS FLED--AND AS THE GHOST DID NOT APPEAR--

LOOK, TOMMY-- I WAS SUPPOSED TO PLAY HAMLET TONIGHT! DO I OR DON'T I?

WE CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER-- GET INTO YOUR COSTUME!



Suddenly--

NO! I AM READY FOR THE PERFORMANCE!

UGH!



STUNNED BY THE GHOST'S APPEARANCE AND POWER--THE ACTORS FLED IN TERROR--

C'MON-- LET'S SCRAM!

NOW YOU'VE DONE IT-- WE DON'T HAVE A CAST!



A WEIRD GLOW SUFFUSED THE GRIM VISITOR-- A SEPULCHRAL VOICE ECHOED HOLLOWLY--

O RULERS OF THE SPIRIT WORLD-- SEE MY PLIGHT-- HELP ME!

HOLY MACKEREL-- WHAT'S HE UP TO?



FROM THE DARK WORLD THAT IS DEATH'S DOMAIN-- A FEARSOME GROUP TOOK SHAPE--

IT IS THE ORIGINAL CAST OF HAMLET! THEY RETURN TO PERFORM WITH ME-- TONIGHT!



THIS BEGAN THE MOST FANTASTIC PERFORMANCE IN THEATRICAL HISTORY! BUT AS THE CURTAIN ROSE, CHAOS FILLED THE HALL --



TH- THEY'RE GHOSTS! LEMME OUT OF HERE!

BUT-- THE EXITS WERE BLOCKED BY GHASTLY USHERS -- RETURNED FROM THE GRAVE!

BACK! YOU WILL REMAIN-- UNTIL THE FINAL CURTAIN!



NEVER BEFORE HAD SUCH ACTING BEEN SEEN! THE AUDIENCE FORGOT ITS TERROR-- AND WHEN THE PLAY WAS OVER --



BRAVO!

GREAT!

And AT THE LAST CURTAIN CALL --

LOOK-- THEY'VE ALL VANISHED-- EXCEPT FOR HAMLET AND THE COSTUMES!

YES-- AND NOW HE'S DISAPPEARING!



When THE MORNING REVIEWS WERE PUBLISHED --

LOOK AT THIS ONE! "ONLY A GENIUS COULD HAVE STAGED THIS PLAY-- TOMMY BEAL IS BROADWAY BOUND!"

THIS IS GREAT! AND YOU KNOW-- OLD TODD HELPED A LOT! LET'S THANK HIM!



But-- AT THE STAGE DOOR-- A CHILLING SIGHT--

HOLY SMOKE!

TOMMY? THEY'RE TODD'S BELONGINGS!



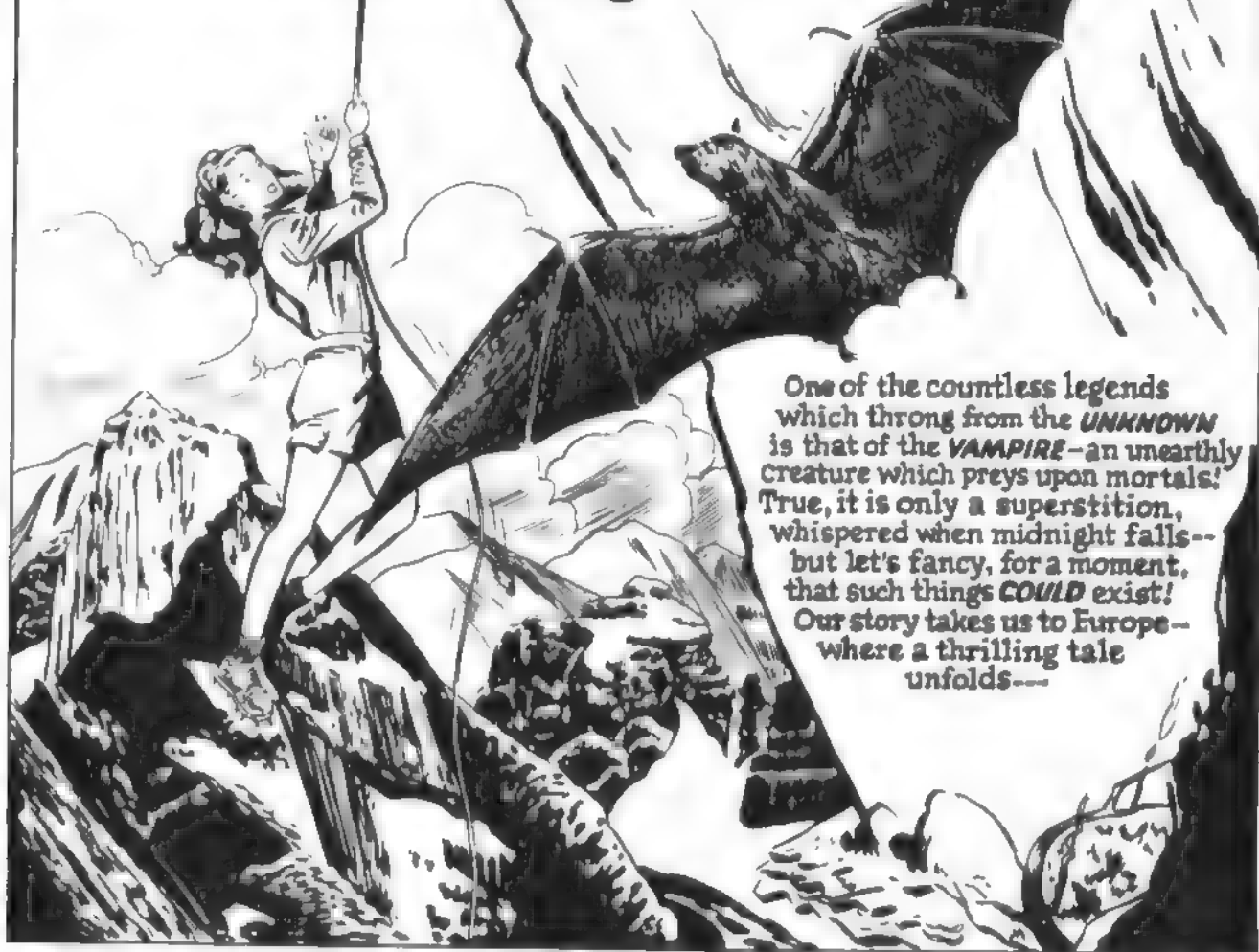
NO WONDER HE COULD PUT THE HEX ON CARTER'S GHOST!

YES, CARRIE-- IT'S ALL CLEAR NOW! TODD WAS THE FIRST STAGE DOORMAN OF THIS THEATRE-- A HUNDRED YEARS AGO!



The End

BAT By Night



One of the countless legends which throng from the **UNKNOWN** is that of the **VAMPIRE**--an unearthly creature which preys upon mortals! True, it is only a superstition, whispered when midnight falls--but let's fancy, for a moment, that such things **COULD** exist! Our story takes us to Europe--where a thrilling tale unfolds---

THE SORBONNE, PARIS. PROFESSOR GOLLET, RENOWNED AUTHORITY ON THE UNKNOWN, ADDRESSES HIS CLASS --

--AND THIS REMOTE, WILD SECTOR, AMIDST THE GLOOMY PEAKS OF THE PYRENEES, HOLDS ANCIENT WONDERS YOU YOUNGSTERS HAVE NEVER DREAMED OF!

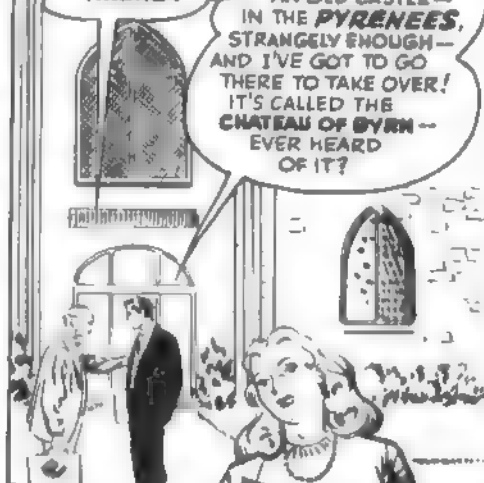
THE SUBJECT HELD A STRANGE INTEREST FOR ONE PUPIL, YOUNG GEORGE TELLIER--

I HEAR YOU'RE LEAVING US, GEORGE, AND I'M SORRY! ANYTHING WRONG?

NOT REALLY! IT'S JUST THAT I'VE INHERITED AN OLD CASTLE-- IN THE **PYRENEES**, STRANGELY ENOUGH-- AND I'VE GOT TO GO THERE TO TAKE OVER! IT'S CALLED THE **CHATEAU OF BYRN**-- EVER HEARD OF IT?

HAVE I! IT'S A FASCINATING OLD PLACE--IN A REGION KNOWN FOR ITS SUPER-NATURAL PHENOMENA! YOU'RE A LUCKY CHAP!

MAYBE--BUT I'LL BE LONESOME THERE! SAY, IF IT'S **THAT** INTERESTING TO YOU, HOW'S ABOUT COMING ALONG FOR A **VISIT**?



AND SO IT WAS THAT THE PROFESSOR AND HIS YOUNG STUDENT HEADED FOR THE DISTANT MOUNTAINS--

The Land of MYSTERY!

SO THAT'S THE CHATEAU OF BYRN! MAYBE IT'S JUST AN OLD MAN'S IMAGINATION, BUT A STRANGE PRESENCE SEEMS TO HANG OVER IT -- A FOREBODING OF THINGS TO COME ---

BR-RRR! YOU'RE SCARING ME, PROFESSOR GOLLET! ALL I CAN SAY IS, I'M GLAD YOU'RE ALONG TO FIGHT OFF THE GHOSTS!

BUT AS THE UNEVENTFUL WEEKS PASS --

GUESS I WAS WRONG, GEORGE! NOTHING HAPPENING AROUND HERE -- WE MIGHT JUST AS WELL BE BACK IN PARIS!

I'M AFRAID WE HAVE BUT ONE EXCITEMENT IN THESE PARTS, M'SIEU-- MOUNTAIN CLIMBING!

BRIOT'S RIGHT! HOW'S ABOUT IT, PROFESSOR?

UP--UP AMID THE LOFTY PEAKS! THEN, SUDDENLY, CUTTING THROUGH THE MISTY AIR --

HELP! HELP!

GREAT SCOTT! THAT VOICE, IT-- IT'S A WOMAN!

IT CAME FROM THE DIRECTION OF THAT JUTTING CRAG! LET'S GO!

THERE SHE IS-- HANGING OUT THERE IN SPACE!

THERE--THERE'S NO WAY TO GET NEAR HER --UNLESS WE CLIMB THE CLIFF AND PULL HER UP FROM ABOVE! HANG ON, MISS! WE'RE COMING!

BUT AS THEY REACH THE PEAK --

HOLY SMOKE! SHE LET GO!

EEEEEE!

THEN, AFTER A PAINFUL DESCENT TO RECOVER THE UNFORTUNATE GIRL'S BODY --

STRANGE! A FALL LIKE THAT, AND SHE ISN'T CRUSHED! THE POOR KID DIDN'T EVEN BLEED!

POOR KID, DID YOU SAY? CHANGE THAT WORD TO LUCKY! IT'S A MIRACLE, BUT THIS GIRL'S STILL ALIVE!

WHAT WONDER IS THIS, THAT COULD SURVIVE
A 500-FOOT DROP? WHAT DO YOU
THINK, READER?

SHE'S-- BEAUTIFUL!
BUT THOSE NAILS--
SO STRANGELY
LONG---



LET'S NOT LOSE ANY TIME!
WE MUST GET HER TO
THE CHATEAU!

YES--IT WOULD BE
TRAGIC IF SHE DIED
NOW!--WONDER WHO
SHE IS? I'VE NEVER
SEEN HER IN
THESE PARTS!



HOURS LATER-- AS THE UNKNOWN
VISITOR REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS---

YOU--YOU SAVED MY LIFE,
AND I'M THANKFUL! I'M
THE BARONESS--
JEANNE CALLEAU--

AND I'M GEORGE
TELLIER! I NOTICED
A CALLEAU CASTLE
ON THE MAP SOME
DISTANCE AWAY--
YOU MUST BE FROM
THERE!



AH, MADAMOISELLE,
IT WAS OUR HAPPINESS--
RESCUING SUCH A
BEAUTIFUL
YOUNG LADY!

NEVER MIND THOSE
PERSONAL REMARKS
NOW, BRIOT! BETTER
SEE WHAT'S KEEPING
THE DOCTOR!

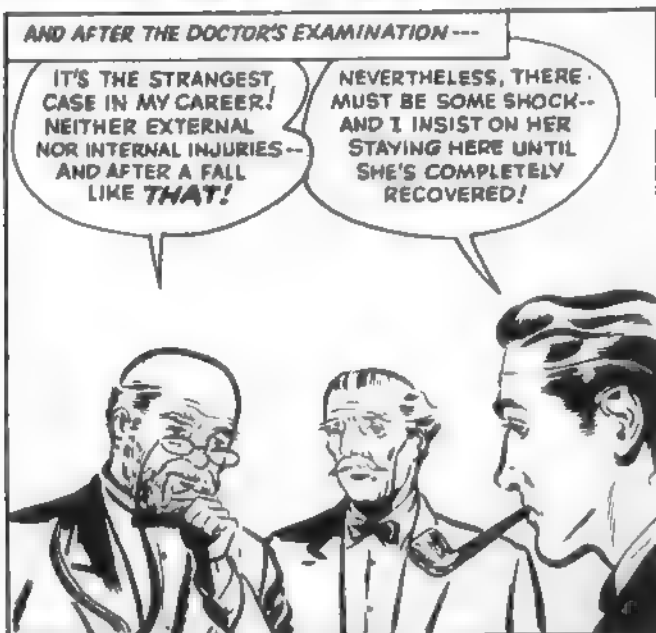
BUT
MR. TELLIER--
THERE'S NO
WOMAN IN THE
WORLD WHO DOESN'T
LOVE TO HEAR THAT
SHE'S BEAUTIFUL!



AND AFTER THE DOCTOR'S EXAMINATION---

IT'S THE STRANGEST
CASE IN MY CAREER!
NEITHER EXTERNAL
NOR INTERNAL INJURIES--
AND AFTER A FALL
LIKE **THAT!**

NEVERTHELESS, THERE
MUST BE SOME SHOCK--
AND I INSIST ON HER
STAYING HERE UNTIL
SHE'S COMPLETELY
RECOVERED!



THEN CAME HAPPY DAYS, DURING WHICH GEORGE
FELT HIMSELF DRAWN CLOSER AND CLOSER TOWARDS
JEANNE! FINALLY, HER STRENGTH ENTIRELY
REGAINED --

YOU'VE BEEN WONDERFUL
TO ME -- BUT NOW IT'S TIME
FOR ME TO GO BACK HOME!
I'LL RIDE BACK TONIGHT!
FATHER PROBABLY THINKS
I'VE BEEN VISITING A
GIRL FRIEND --

I HATE TO SEE YOU
GO! I'LL HAVE **TWO**
HORSES SADDLED,
AND RIDE WITH YOU!



ER-- MAYBE YOU'D BETTER NOT, GEORGE! YOU SEE, I -- WELL, MY FATHER'S NEVER BEEN VERY FRIENDLY WITH YOUR FAMILY! -- **YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?**

THAT'S TOO BAD... BUT I'M **NOT** GOING TO LET YOU RIDE THROUGH THESE DARK MOUNTAINS ALONE! ONE OF MY SERVANTS MUST ACCOMPANY YOU-- **I INSIST!**



AND SO JEANNE DEPARTED, ACCOMPANIED BY A SERVANT! BUT, AN HOUR LATER --

JEANNE -- YOU'RE BACK! WHY ARE YOU LOOKING LIKE THAT -- WHAT'S WRONG?

SOMETHING-- **TERRIBLE** HAS HAPPENED! YOUR SERVANT -- **HE'S BEEN KILLED!**



I-- I CAN HARDLY FIND WORDS FOR IT -- BUT JUST AS WE APPROACHED CALLEAU CASTLE -- A MONSTROUS **BAT** CAME FLYING TOWARD US!--



"OH, HE TRIED TO PROTECT ME -- HE TRIED -- **BUT IT WAS NO USE!** THE THING WAS UPON HIM IN A MOMENT! LIKE A COWARD, I TURNED AND RAN, BUT BY THAT TIME -- **IT WAS ALL UP WITH HIM!**"



MOMENTS LATER --

IT'S A RIDICULOUS STORY, PROFESSOR -- OBVIOUSLY, SHE MUST STILL BE SUFFERING FROM SHOCK FROM THAT FALL! SHE'S ASLEEP NOW -- I GAVE HER A SEDATIVE!

MAYBE -- MAYBE HER STORY **ISN'T** RIDICULOUS, GEORGE! I'D SUGGEST YOU SEND OUT A PARTY TO CHECK ON WHAT **REALLY** HAPPENED TO THAT SERVANT OF YOURS!



THE PARTY WAS SENT OUT -- AND IT RETURNED, PALE AND HORROR-STRICKEN!

WE -- WE FOUND HIM, SIR! HE WAS -- **DEAD!** IT -- IT WAS AS IF SOME WILD BEAST --



SHAKEN BY HER EXPERIENCE, JEANNE STAYED ON AT THE CHATEAU OF BYRN, AND GEORGE'S FEELING FOR HER GREW UNTIL --

I -- I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU, JEANNE -- YOU'RE THE GIRL I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR! I CAN'T DO WITHOUT YOU, DARLING!

AND I -- LOVE YOU TOO--

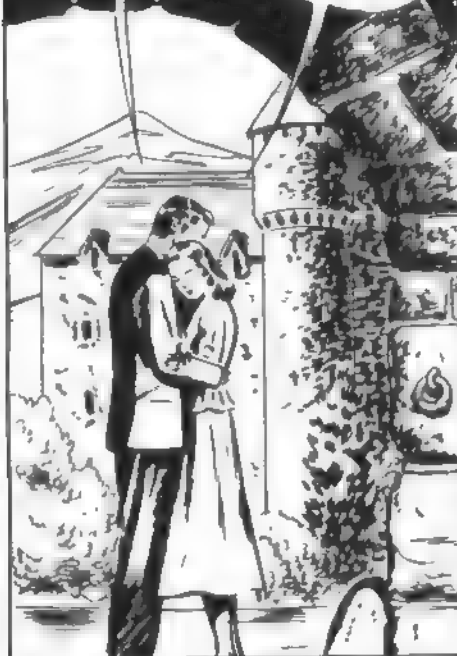
BUT THERE'S ONE THING I MUST TELL YOU, GEORGE! COULD YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT BRIOT, YOUR MAJOR-DOMO? HE SEEMS IN LOVE WITH ME, TOO, AND HIS JEALOUSY IS BEGINNING TO BOTHER ME!

YOU MEAN HE'S DARED TO -- DON'T WORRY, DEAR! I'LL SEE THAT HE DOESN'T TROUBLE YOU ANY FURTHER!

BUT BRIOT SHOWED AN UNEXPECTED REBELLION!

MAYBE I DO WORK FOR YOU, M'SIEU, BUT I'M STILL A MAN-- AND I LOVE HER! IT'S YOU THAT'S JEALOUS-- BECAUSE YOU KNOW JEANNE CARES FOR ME!

FOR THE LAST TIME, BRIOT, I'M WARNING YOU -- LEAVE THAT GIRL ALONE OR YOU'RE FIRED!



THAT NIGHT -- AS GEORGE WAS ABOUT TO RETIRE --

WHAT THE --! AM I AWAKE, OR IS THIS A BAD DREAM? THAT LOOKS LIKE JEANNE-- IN BRIOT'S ARMS!

NO, IT COULDN'T BE -- IT COULDN'T BE! IT MUST BE SOME OTHER GIRL! BETTER TAKE THIS GUN ALONG, THOUGH-- BRIOT CAN BE DANGEROUS!

ON THE TERRACE BELOW-- AN AWFUL DISCOVERY!

HOLY SMOKE! IT'S BRIOT-- DEAD-- WITH THE MARKS OF A WILD BEAST ON HIM!







AS GEORGE DEPARTS, MYSTIFIED---

LOOK--COMING
OUT OF THE
CASTLE!
IT--IT'S A
SWARM OF
BATS!

YES--BATS
BY NIGHT!
AND I'M NOT
SURPRISED,
EITHER!

OH, COME, PROFESSOR -- YOU AND YOUR AIRS
OF STRANGE KNOWLEDGE! THERE MUST BE
SOME PERFECTLY NATURAL EXPLANATION
FOR ALL THIS! I DON'T KNOW WHY
JEANNE DIDN'T TELL ME ABOUT THE
CONDITION OF THIS PLACE, BUT
SHE MUST HAVE HER
REASONS FOR IT!

I'M AFRAID
SHE HAS, MY
BOY--GOOD
REASONS!

IT WAS THE FIRST ARGUMENT BETWEEN
GEORGE AND HIS OLD TEACHER--

PLEASE DON'T QUESTION JEANNE IN ANY WAY,
PROFESSOR! I LOVE HER AND WE'RE GOING
TO BE MARRIED! I WON'T HEAR OF ANY
SUSPICION OF ANY KIND AGAINST
HER, AND THAT'S THAT!

WHY, IT'S **RIDICULOUS** TO
THINK THAT JEANNE KNOWS
ANYTHING ABOUT ALL THIS!
SHE'S JUST A LOVELY GIRL--
THE GIRL I LOVE!

WELL--I HOPE YOU
WON'T LEARN
DIFFERENT TO
YOUR SORROW!

SLEEP WAS FAR FROM GEORGE AS THE STRANGE AND
TERRIBLE EVENTS HE HAD PASSED THROUGH CROWDED
HIS MIND! THEN SUDDENLY--THE CREAKING OF A DOOR--

JEANNE!
WHAT ON
EARTH--

I--I OVERHEARD YOUR
CONVERSATION WITH PROFESSOR
GOLLET IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE
MY ROOM--AND IT'S BEEN
TORTURING ME!

OH, GEORGE,
I COULDN'T STAND
IT IF YOU THOUGHT
THAT--

UH-HUH! IT'S ENOUGH THAT
I HAD TO LISTEN TO GOLLET,
WITHOUT ANY MORE SUCH
NONSENSE FROM **YOU!**
REMEMBER, DARLING--
I LOVE YOU!

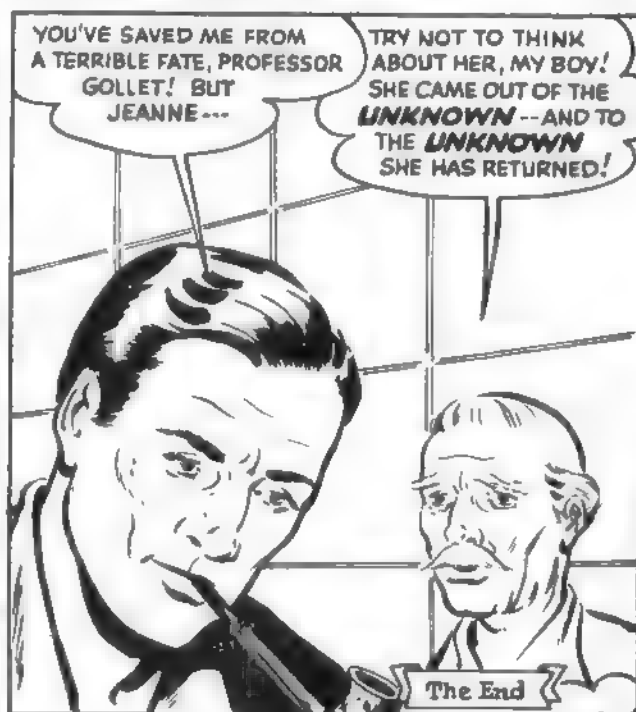




THE GLINTING MIRRORS REFLECT THE BAT A THOUSANDFOLD! FOR A MOMENT IT PAUSES, HOVERING UNCERTAINLY, AND THEN --



ONCE AGAIN A SUBTLE CHANGE -- AND WHAT HAD A MOMENT AGO BEEN A BAT IS NOW --



WHAT KNOWLEDGE WE HAVE OF THE GRIM CREATURES OF THE BEYOND IS FRAGMENTARY--AND OFTEN MIS-LEADING! UNTIL RECENTLY, FOR EXAMPLE, IT WAS BELIEVED THAT THE MOST DREADED OF NIGHT CREATURES--THE VAMPIRE--COULD TAKE ONLY THE FORM OF A BAT--BUT NOW WE HAVE LEARNED OTHERWISE--AS WAS PROVED BY THE SPINE-CHILLING CAREER OF...

The VAMPIRE CAT!



THE FIRST RAYS OF DAWN!
I MUST ACT QUICKLY...
OR PERISH!

MY STRENGTH'S
GONE! CAN'T... HOLD
IT OFF... ANY LONGER!

IT WAS ALL HALLOWS EVE, AND MIDNIGHT APPROACHED
---BUT ALL WAS MERRIMENT AT THE HOME OF FLO BLAIN---

WHO'S THE STUNNING
GIRL, FLO? SHE'S VERY
EXOTIC!

NAME'S VILMA, A GYPSY...
MOTHER INVITED HER FOR
ATMOSPHERE! IT'S
HALLOWE'EN, YOU
KNOW!

TELEPHONE,
MISS BLAIN!

I'LL ONLY
BE A MINUTE,
DARLING!

SURE,
HONEY--
I'LL MEET
YOU OUT-
SIDE!







ON THE WAY HOME---VILMA FELT A DREAD CHANGE COME OVER HER---



IT'S ALMOST MORNING!
I MUST FIND A VICTIM
QUICKLY...BEFORE
DAWN!

AFTER PARKING NEAR A DARKENED ALLEY---



AH---WHAT LUCK!
EVERYTHING IS
PERFECT!

HUGE TALONS RAKED THE DARKNESS---
BESTIAL JAWS HUNGRED FOR PREY---
WHILE DEATH LOOKED ON!



H-HELP!

WHEN THE VICTIM HAD BEEN CLAIMED---



IT---IT'S DONE---AND
I'M SAVED! BUT BEFORE
TOMORROW'S DAWN---I
MUST PROWL AGAIN!
HA---NOW I HAVE POWER
---NOW ALL MY ENEMIES
WILL SUFFER!

FOR THREE NIGHTS VILMA'S
REIGN OF TERROR CONTINUED!
THEN, AT A SMALL DINNER
PARTY GIVEN BY FLO'S MOTHER
TO RECONCILE THE PARTED
LOVERS---



---AND SO I
ASKED VILMA
HERE TO EX-
PLAIN WHAT
HAPPENED!
AFTER ALL, IT
WAS A GAY
PARTY AND---

IT'S NOT
NECESSARY TO
EXPLAIN, MOTHER
---STEVE AND I
HAVE
ALREADY
MADE UP!

SUDDENLY---AN
UNINVITED GUEST---



HEAVENS!
IT'S A
MOUSE!

IMPULSIVELY, WITH A CATLIKE LEAP, VILMA
GWOOPED UP THE TERRIFIED CREATURE---



HA! GOT
HIM!

AS VILMA RELEASED THE MOUSE---A FEARFUL THOUGHT ENTERED STEVE'S MIND---

GREAT GUNS---VILMA LOOKED AS IF SHE WERE READY TO---
EAT IT!
I... I THINK WE'D ALL BETTER GO OUT ON THE TERRACE FOR COFFEE!



SOON, ANOTHER INCIDENT THAT HELD GRIM MEANING---



OH! GET THAT NASTY BEAST AWAY!

REX... COME HERE! I'LL HAVE TO TIE YOU UP IN THE GARDEN!

LATER---AS A MURDEROUS FIGURE STALKED THE SHADOWY GARDEN---



YIPE!

YOU WON'T GET ANOTHER CHANCE TO GIVE ME AWAY!

WHEN THE MANGLED CORPSE WAS FOUND---

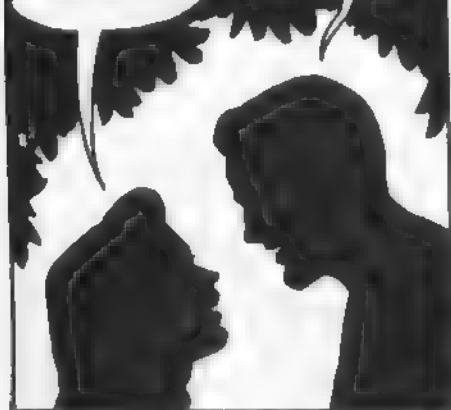


OH---POOR REX, HE'S BEEN CLAWED TO DEATH!

HE---HE'S BEEN TORN TO SHREDS...AS IF BY SOME GREAT CAT!

C-CAT? DARLING---I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING GHASTLY---SOME-THING UNBELIEVABLE---BUT I CAN'T SHAKE THE IDEA!

THEN MAYBE YOU'D BETTER TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT!



SO TOLD OF HER GIRLISH WISH---THAT HAD BEEN MADE UNDER THE PHILOSOPHER TREE---AT MIDNIGHT---



BUT---IT'S ONLY A LEGEND! IT COULDN'T HAVE COME TRUE!

OF COURSE NOT, HONEY---FORGET IT!

BUT NEARBY, A HATE-CRAZED MIND LISTENED---AND PLOTTED AWFUL VENGEANCE!



SO---IT WAS SHE WHO STARTED THIS! THE FOOL---SHE'S GIVEN ME THE POWER I'VE ALWAYS WANTED! NOW---SHE MUST DIE!



7:00 P.M., INSIDE THE DARKENED ROOM...
BRILLIANT TERROR!



OH!

FOOLS, YOU FORGOT
...CATS CAN SEE
IN THE DARK...
I'VE BEEN
WAITING
FOR YOU!



GRROWW!

OKAY, VILMA... YOU
ASKED FOR
THIS!



THE LIGHT REVEALED A STRANGE
SIGHT INDEED...

MEOW!...
PUR-R-R-R!

HA! LOOKS LIKE
THAT CATNIP
WORKS... EVEN
ON VAMPIRE
CATS!



BUT... THE HUMAN IN THE
BEAST WAS STILL STRONG
... STILL CUNNING...

A TRICK... AND
IT HAS COST ME
PRECIOUS TIME!
I MUST ACT...
NOW... BEFORE
DAWN!



WITH AN INHUMAN LEAP...

VAR-R-R-RGH



A DESPERATE BATTLE FOLLOWED! SUDDENLY, A
ROOSTER CROWED SHRILLY... THE DARKNESS WANED
... AND...

CRASH!

THANK HEAVENS
... SHE'S DONE
FOR!



... AND IN THE NEXT MOMENT...

WELL, THERE'S VILMA
... HEAVEN HELP HER!

STEVE
... NOW
HORRIBLE!



MEOW!

DAWN HAD COME, AND
THUS VILMA'S EVIL WAS
TRAPPED TILL DEATH...
IN THE BODY OF A
HARMLESS CAT!

THE
END!

"True" GHOSTS of HISTORY

ANCIENT LEGENDS TELL US OF MANY GREAT MEN WHO DIED SUDDENLY AND VIOLENTLY, RETURNING IN SPIRITUAL FORM TO THE SCENE OF THEIR DEATH -- TO RELIVE THEIR TRAGIC END! BUT ONE SUCH LEGEND HAS SPRUNG UP WITHIN OUR OWN BORDERS-- SWORN TO BY THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN--THE GHOST OF PRESIDENT MCKINLEY!



ON SEPTEMBER 6TH, 1901, A GREAT RECEPTION WAS HELD FOR PRESIDENT MCKINLEY AT THE PAN-AMERICAN EXPOSITION IN BUFFALO--

THIS IS INDEED AN HONOR, MR. PRESIDENT!



BUT SUDDENLY, AN ANARCHIST-TERRORIST BY THE NAME OF LEON CZOLGOSZ CROPT UP CLOSE AND FIRED TWO SHOTS AT THE PRESIDENT!

THE ASSASSIN WAS SEIZED, CONVICTED, AND LATER EXECUTED-- BUT HIS DASTARDLY WORK WAS DONE! THE PRESIDENT'S LAST WORDS WERE--

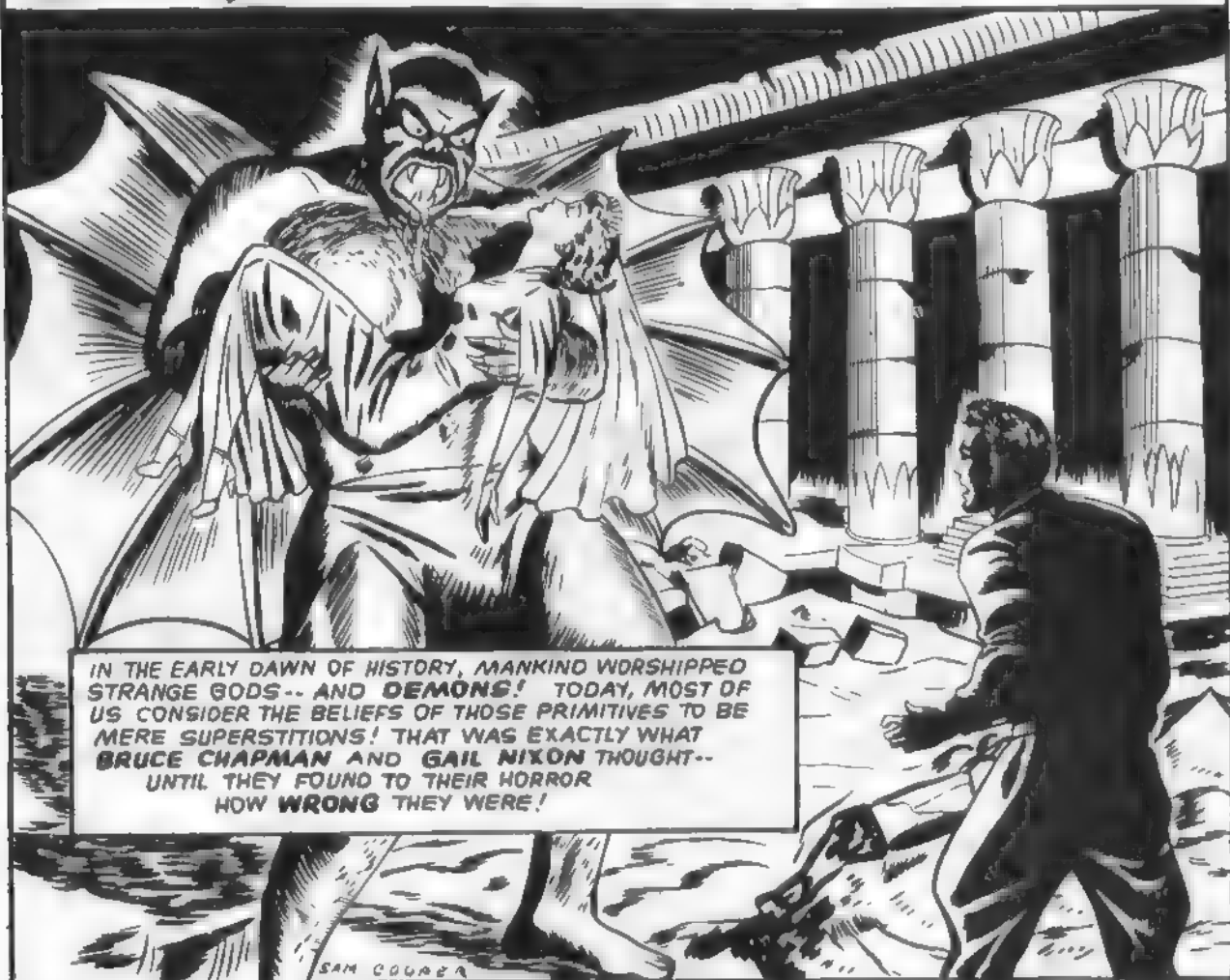


BUT APPARENTLY WILLIAM MCKINLEY'S WILL TO LIVE WAS TOO STRONG FOR THE BONDAGE OF DEATH-- FOR IT IS SAID THAT HIS SPIRIT RETURNS EACH SEPTEMBER 6TH, AT THE EXACT MOMENT OF HIS DEATH, AT THE EXACT SPOT THE TRAGEDY OCCURRED, TO RE-ENACT THE FATAL DEED!

THEN, THE WITNESSES ATTEST, THE GHOSTLY PRESIDENT DOUBLES UP IN PAIN-- BEFORE VANISHING FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH-- UNTIL HIS REAPPEARANCE THE FOLLOWING YEAR!



BRIDE ^{of the} BEAST



IN THE EARLY DAWN OF HISTORY, MANKIND WORSHIPPED STRANGE GODS-- AND DEMONS! TODAY, MOST OF US CONSIDER THE BELIEFS OF THOSE PRIMITIVES TO BE MERE SUPERSTITIONS! THAT WAS EXACTLY WHAT BRUCE CHAPMAN AND GAIL NIXON THOUGHT-- UNTIL THEY FOUND TO THEIR HORROR HOW **WRONG** THEY WERE!

SAM COURER

IN THE HEART OF THE RED SEA --

LISTEN TO THIS, GAIL-- THE FIRST DRAFT OF MY ARTICLE ABOUT OUR EXCAVATIONS IN MESOPOTAMIA!... "NEAR THE RUINS OF BABYLON, A MOMENTOUS DISCOVERY WAS MADE-- A 4,000 YEAR-OLD **TEMPLE OF BELIAL**, WHERE THE DEVIL-GOD OR SON OF SATAN WAS WORSHIPPED. FRAGMENTARY INSCRIPTIONS ON THE RUINED TEMPLE WALLS CONSISTED OF MAGICAL SPELLS DESIGNED TO WARD OFF THE GREAT GOD **ORMAZD**, WHO WAS BELIAL'S ARCH-ENEMY IN BABYLONIAN MYTHOLOGY..."

OH, BRUCE-- IS THAT ALL YOU CAN THINK ABOUT?

WE'RE FINISHED WITH THAT-- IT'S IN THE **PAST**! GOLLY, SOMETIMES I WISH YOU COULD GET AS ROMANTIC AND WORKED UP ABOUT SOMETHING **ALIVE**!

THINK I'M AN OLD FUDDY-
DUDDY, EH? I'LL SHOW
YOU HOW **WRONG**
YOU ARE!



YOU'VE COME TO MEAN MORE TO ME THAN JUST AN ASSISTANT ON MY ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPEDITIONS-- I REALIZED WEEKS AGO THAT I'D FALLEN IN LOVE WITH YOU! AND JUST TO SHOW YOU THAT I CAN BE ROMANTIC-- **LET'S GET MARRIED RIGHT AWAY!** THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN CAN PERFORM THE CEREMONY!

OH, THAT WOULD BE-- **WONDERFUL!** BUT WHAT WOULD WE USE FOR A WEDDING RING?

I'VE GOT JUST THE THING-- AN ANCIENT BABYLONIAN GOLD BETROTHAL RING I DUG UP IN THE RUINS! WHY, I'LL BET IT WAS FASHIONED FOR SOME BEAUTIFUL BABYLONIAN PRINCESS SOME 4,000 YEARS AGO!



I HAVEN'T FINISHED TRANSLATING THE INSCRIPTION ON THE RING-- BUT AS FAR AS I'VE GONE, IT READS-- **"BETROTHED FOREVER!"**

OH, THAT'S JUST **PERFECT!** IT'S THE MOST ROMANTIC WEDDING RING ANY GIRL EVER HAD!

NEXT DAY, AS THE SHIP WENDS SLOWLY THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL--

... NOW PLACE THE WEDDING RING ON THE BRIDE'S FINGER AND REPEAT AFTER ME ...



WITH THIS RING I THEE W---

CRASH!



OUT OF NOWHERE-- AN AWFUL SIGHT!



OH!!

AM I SEEING THINGS?

GREAT SCOTT!



IT... IT'S INCREDIBLE-- BUT THAT **THING** RESEMBLES THE ANCIENT GRAVEN IMAGES OF THE BABYLONIAN DEVIL-GOD, **BELIAL!** WE-- WE'VE GOT TO FIGHT IT OFF!



POWERLESS -- BEFORE A GIANT STRENGTH!



QUICK, CAPTAIN! WHERE'S A GUN?

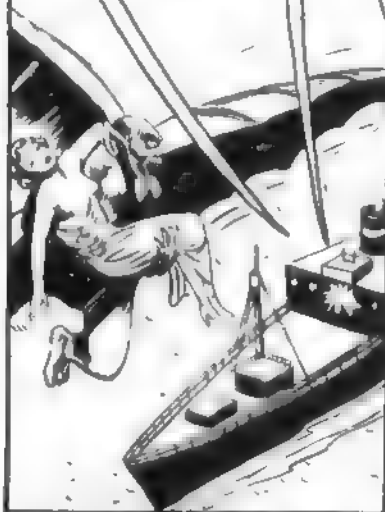
IT WOULDN'T DO ANY GOOD! THE MONSTER'S GONE-- AND YOUR BRIDE WITH HIM!

SOMEHOW, **SOMETHING** SUMMONED THAT BEAST UP FROM THE UNKNOWN-- AND I'VE GOT TO RESCUE GAIL FROM HIS CLUTCHES! IF THAT WAS REALLY BELIAL, HE'S PROBABLY TAKING HER BACK TO THE TEMPLE WE UNCOVERED IN THE MESOPOTAMIAN DESERT-- AND THAT'S WHERE I'M GOING! PUT ME ASHORE, CAPTAIN-- QUICK!

AN HOUR LATER, AT A SMALL AIRPORT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SUEZ --

AT THAT PRICE, I WILL FLY YOU **ANYWHERE**, EFFENDI! LET ME PLACE YOUR SUITCASES IN THE BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT-- AND WE WILL BE OFF!

I'LL KEEP IT WITH ME-- I'VE GOT BOOKS IN THERE I'LL NEED TO STUDY WHILE YOU'RE FLYING THIS CRATE! LET'S GO-- AND GIVE HER **FULL THROTTLE!**



THE FACT THAT BELIAL APPEARED JUST AS I PLACED THAT ANCIENT RING ON GAIL'S FINGER MUST BE **MORE** THAN JUST A COINCIDENCE-- I OUGHT TO KNOW FOR SURE AS SOON AS I FINISH TRANSLATING THE INSCRIPTION THAT WAS ON THE RING! LUCKY I COPIED THE WHOLE THING DOWN THE DAY I FIRST FOUND IT...

FINALLY-- YE GODS-- THE ENTIRE INSCRIPTION READS-- "**BETROTHED FOREVER-- TO BELIAL!**"! NOW I SEE IT ALL-- IT WAS THAT ACCURSED RING!



HOURS LATER, OVER THE RUINED TEMPLE OF BELIAL --

ACCORDING TO LEGEND-- BELIAL HAS ENORMOUS POWERS-- BUT NOW THAT THE RING HAS SUMMONED HIM INTO THE REAL WORLD, HE'LL BE BOUND BY NATURAL LAWS--WHICH MEANS HE CAN TRAVEL ONLY AS FAST AS ANY ORDINARY WINGED CREATURE HIS SIZE! SO THE PLANE PROBABLY PASSED HIM IN THE NIGHT -- AND I MIGHT STILL BE ABLE TO RESCUE GAIL!



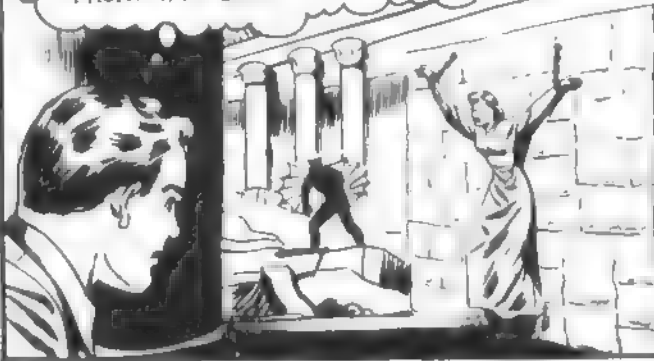
THERE'S THE ANCIENT ALTAR, WHERE BABYLONIAN MAIDENS WERE SACRIFICED AS THE BRIDES OF BELIAL THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO -- OH-OH, I HEAR THE SOUND OF WINGS!



IT. IT'S HIM! GAIL STILL SEEMS TO BE IN A DEAD FAINT--THANK HEAVEN FOR THAT!



HE GLANCED UP AT THE MOON-- AND THEN WENT SCRAMBLING OFF AMONG THE ROCKS, AS IF LOOKING FOR SOMETHING! WAIT-- NOW I REMEMBER-- THE SACRIFICES TO BELIAL WERE ALWAYS MADE AT THE TIME OF THE FULL MOON, AND WITH A SPECIAL SACRIFICIAL SCIMITAR! THERE'S STILL A LITTLE TIME BEFORE THE MOON IS COMPLETELY FULL, AND BELIAL MAY HAVE GONE OFF TO DIG UP THE LONG-BURIED SCIMITAR! SO THERE OUGHT TO BE ENOUGH TIME FOR ME TO RELEASE GAIL AND GET HER AWAY FROM THAT DEVIL!



BRUCE-- WHERE... WHERE AM I?

NO TIME TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS-- I'VE GOT TO GET THESE CHAINS OFF YOU! BLAST IT-- THEY'RE TOO CUNNINGLY FASTENED -- I'D NEED A BLOWTORCH TO RELEASE YOU!



WAIT-- **THE RING!** PUTTING IT ON YOUR FINGER MARKED YOU AS THE BRIDE OF BELIAL-- SO MAYBE TAKING IT OFF WILL PREVENT YOU FROM BECOMING HIS SACRIFICIAL VICTIM-- AND SEND HIM BACK TO THE LIMBO WE SUMMONED HIM FROM!



BRUCE! YOU'RE HURTING ME!



IT WENT ON EASILY ENOUGH-- BUT IT SEEMS TO HAVE SHRUNK ON YOUR FINGER-- IT WON'T COME OFF!

THE MOON WILL SOON BE AT ITS ZENITH -- I'VE GOT TO DO **SOMETHING**-- AND **FAST!** AND SINCE I CAN'T DO ANYTHING THROUGH NATURAL MEANS, ALL I CAN DO IS TRY THE **SUPER-NATURAL**-- AND FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE!



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, BRUCE?

IN ANCIENT BABYLONIAN MYTHOLOGY, BELIAL'S ARCH-ENEMY WAS ORMAZO, THE GOD OF GOOD-- SO THAT IF BELIAL ACTUALLY EXISTS, THEN ORMAZO MUST ALSO EXIST! IN THE LIMBO OF NOTHINGNESS IN WHICH BELIAL EXISTED BEFORE THE RING SUMMONED HIM TO EARTH, ORMAZO PROBABLY COULDN'T DESTROY HIM -- BUT NOW THAT BELIAL IS IN HIS VULNERABLE BODILY FORM, HE CAN BE ANNIHILATED! SO OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO INVOKE ORMAZO-- TO SUMMON HIM UP TO DO BATTLE WITH BELIAL!



A STRANGE INCANTATION!

HEAR ME, O MIGHTY ORMAZO-- APPEAR TO US TO DESTROY THY ARCH-ENEMY, BELIAL -- FOR HE HAS RETURNED TO EARTH TO WREAK EVIL UPON THE INNOCENT ONCE MORE! LET **THIS** BE THE HOUR PREDICTED IN THE SACRED BOOK OF AHURA-MAZDA, WHEN THE GOD OF GOOD SHALL VANQUISH THE GOD OF EVIL!



BELIAL WILL NOT BE PROTECTED BY SPELLS, SINCE HE WILL NOT BE EXPECTING YOU, O ORMAZO-- SO MATERIALIZE AND SLAY THY ANCIENT ENEMY!



BRUCE-- IT'S BELIAL!

HOLY SMOKE! IT'S-- TOO LATE!



BUT SUDDENLY, LIKE THE
CRACK OF DOOM ITSELF--



THEN, IN A MIGHTY STROKE--



BELIAL'S DISINTEGRATING...
VANISHING!

YES--
FOR
GOOD!



AND BRUCE--
MY CHAINS--
THEY'RE
FALLING
AWAY!

YES-- AND THE RING IS
FALLING FROM YOUR FINGER!



OH, BRUCE--
I I'M
AFRAID!

STEADY, HONEY-- WE WON'T BE HURT!
THE SWORD ONLY DESCENDED TO
MELT THAT RING SO IT CAN NEVER
BE WORN AGAIN-- BY ANYONE!



WITH A LAST FLOURISH AGAINST THE STARRY HEAVENS--

THE ANCIENT BABYLONIANS CALLED THEIR GOD
ORMAZD-- BUT IT'S PROBABLY THE SAME GOD
THAT'S KNOWN BY MANY OTHER NAMES AMONG
DIFFERENT PEOPLES! AND
WHATEVER ITS NAME,
THERE'S NO DOUBT
THAT IT'S **GOOD!**

AND NOW WE CAN
GET BACK TO CNI-
LIZATION-- AND BUY
A PLAIN, SIMPLE,
ORDINARY
WEDDING RING!



The End

ASSAULT *from the* UNKNOWN



GREAT SCOTT-- I...I CAN SCARCELY BELIEVE MY EYES! GHOSTS, ZOMBIES, WEREWOLVES, VAMPIRES-- ALL HEADING FOR THAT CAVE, AS IF IN ANSWER TO SOME SATANICAL SUMMONS!

"YOU DON'T KNOW ME BY NAME, READER, BUT WE'VE MET MANY TIMES BEFORE-- IN THE PAGES OF THIS MAGAZINE! YES, I'M ALAN HARTWOOD, DELIVER INTO THE SUPERNATURAL-- AND CHIEF WRITER FOR ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN! AND THIS IS THE MOST STARTLING STORY I'VE EVER WRITTEN-- AN ACCOUNT OF A FIENDISH PLOT, A MONSTROUS ASSAULT FROM THE UNKNOWN AGAINST THIS VERY MAGAZINE! I GOT MY FIRST HINT OF THE PLOT ON A GLOOMY, MIST-SHROUDED MOUNTAIN-TOP HIGH IN THE ADIRONDACKS..."



WE COME, O MASTER-- WHAT IS THY WISH?

"MASTER"-- THE ONLY MASTER COMMON TO ALL THESE CREEPS IS SATAN HIMSELF! AND IF HE CALLED THIS CONVENTION, THEN SOMETHING REALLY BIG MUST BE COOKING-- SOMETHING THAT I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT!



"WITHIN A HUGE, HOLLOWED-OUT AMPHITHEATRE..."

WELCOME, O LEGION OF DEMONS! I HAVE SUMMONED YOU BECAUSE EVERY CREATURE IN THE REALM OF THE SUPERNATURAL IS IN GREAT DANGER FROM THE EXPOSES OF THAT CRUSADING MAGAZINE, "ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN"!



DANGER, I SAY-- FOR IT HAS REVEALED TOO MANY OF OUR PRECIOUS SECRETS, WHILE TEACHING HUMANS HOW TO COMBAT SUPERNATURAL FORCES!

YOU SPEAK TRULY, MASTER. THERE IS SCARCELY A SAFE LOCALITY LEFT FOR US TO ATTACK!



WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! MY PLAN CALLS FOR A DIRECT ATTACK ON "ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN"! WE MUST TERRORIZE ITS KEY PERSONNEL-- AND ABOVE ALL, EXTERMINATE ALAN HARTWOOD, ITS CHIEF WRITER!



HARTWOOD KNOWS MORE OF OUR SECRETS THAN ANY MAN ALIVE, SO HE WILL BE DIFFICULT TO TRAP! BUT WE MUST GET HIM-- WE MUST!

WHEW! I'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE THAT CONVENTION OF CREEPS BREAKS UP!



LUCKY I CAMOUFLAGED MY HELICOPTER, OR THOSE FLYING VAMPIRES WOULD HAVE SPOTTED IT! NOW TO GET BACK TO NEW YORK-- FAST!



"HOURS LATER..."

HI, NORA-- I'VE GOT TO SEE THE EDITOR IMMEDIATELY-- IT'S VERY URGENT!

I'M SORRY, MR. HARTWOOD-- HE'S IN CONFERENCE AT THE MOMENT! YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT!



"I WAITED, BUT GRINNED AS I HEARD THE VOICES COMING FROM THE INNER EDITORIAL SANCTUM--AND I COULD EASILY IMAGINE WHAT WAS GOING ON INSIDE..."

BUT, CHIEF, IT'S THE HONEST TRUTH--NONE OF US HAS BEEN ABLE TO DIG UP A LEAD ON ANY GHOST, VAMPIRE, ZOMBIE, OR WEREWOLF LATELY!

I DON'T NEED EXCUSES-- I NEED STORIES! I DON'T CARE WHERE YOU DIG 'EM UP, BUT GET 'EM IN FAST-- AND THEY'D BETTER BE GOOD!

HARTWOOD! WHERE THE DEVIL HAVE YOU BEEN?

WITH THE DEVIL, CHIEF-- BUT LITERALLY! I INTERCEPTED A SATANIC MESSAGE THAT SUMMONED THE MOST FIENDISH DENIZENS OF THE UNKNOWN TO A MEETING IN A SECRET CAVE IN THE ADIRONDACKS-- AND I WENT THERE, TOO! I LEARNED THAT ALL THOSE GHOULS ARE OUT TO DESTROY YOUR MAGAZINE! THE LIFE OF EVERYONE WORKING HERE IS IN DEADLY PERIL!



LOOK, HARTWOOD, I KNOW YOU'RE ONE OF THE WORLD'S LEADING AUTHORITIES ON THE SUPERNATURAL-- BUT DON'T EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT PIPEDREAM! WHY DON'T YOU ADMIT THAT YOU COULDN'T GET ANY ACTUAL LEADS, SO YOU JUST COOKED THIS YARN UP OUT OF YOUR OWN HEAD AND--

BUT I DIDN'T-- IT'S TRUE!

BETTER SKIP IT, I'M BEGINNING TO LOSE MY TEMPER!

WELL, YOU'LL FIND OUT THE TRUTH SOON ENOUGH--WHEN THEY COME TO GET YOU! REMEMBER-- I WARNED YOU! AND NOW ALL I CAN DO IS TRY TO PROTECT THE OTHERS IN THE OFFICE!



"AS I STALKED OUT ANGRILY, MY EYE WAS CAUGHT BY PRETTY NORA COLE-- AND THE THOUGHT CAME TO ME THAT SHE, TOO, WAS IN DANGER..."

I COULDN'T STAND IT IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO HER! BUT HOW CAN I BEST PROTECT HER?

SAY, NORA, HOW ABOUT HAVING DINNER WITH ME TONIGHT?

WHY I'D LOVE TO... ALAN!

LISTEN, NORA-- I'M GOING TO MAKE A VERY ODD REQUEST! I WANT YOU TO TAKE THE POWDER INSIDE THIS POUCH-- AND SPREAD IT AROUND YOUR BED IN A CIRCLE BEFORE YOU GO TO SLEEP TONIGHT!

BUT... BUT WHY? WHAT ON EARTH IS IT?



IT'S A SPECIAL MIXTURE OF HEMLOCK, ACONITE, AND POWDERED SILVER... THE MOST EFFECTIVE KNOWN SUBSTANCE TO KEEP SUPER-NATURAL FORCES AWAY, BECAUSE ITS CERTAIN ANNIHILATION FOR ANY OF THEM TO STEP INTO A CIRCLE MADE OF THAT POWDER! I ALWAYS KEEP A SUPPLY WITH ME-- AND I HAVE A HUNCH YOU'LL BE NEEDING IT, TOO!

WHY THAT'S RIDICULOUS, ALAN-- BUT I'LL DO AS YOU SAY IF YOU TAKE ME OUT DANCING! I'VE BEEN DYING TO GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER!

"I TOOK NORA OUT, OF COURSE-- AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A WONDERFUL EVENING IF I HADN'T BEEN SO WORRIED ABOUT WHERE AND WHEN THE LEGION OF DEMONS WOULD STRIKE FIRST! TOWARDS MIDNIGHT, I DROVE PAST OUR OFFICE BUILDING..."

LOOK-- THAT LIGHT ON THE 14TH FLOOR-- THAT'S OUR OFFICE! AND NO ONE EVER WORKS THIS LATE!

SOMEONE PROBABLY LEFT THE LIGHTS ON! IF THE BUILDING'S OPEN, I'LL GO UP AND TURN THEM OUT!



IT'S LOCKED! THAT MEANS IF ANYONE OR ANYTHING IS UP THERE, IT HAD TO FLY UP! AND THAT TELLS ME HOW I'M GOING TO GET IN! BUT I CAN'T LET NORA IN ON THIS!

IT'S LOCKED-- I MIGHT AS WELL FORGET ABOUT IT AND TAKE YOU HOME!

ALL RIGHT, ALAN!

"AFTER TAKING NORA HOME, I RACED OUT TO THE EAST RIVER DOCK WHERE MY HELICOPTER-SEAPLANE WAS ANCHORED-- AND WAS SOON FLYING BETWEEN THE CANYON-LIKE WALLS OF THE SKYSCRAPERS! THEN, HOVERING OUTSIDE THE EDITORIAL OFFICES OF 'ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN'..."

HOLY SMOKE-- VAMPIRES-- TEARING THE PLACE APART!



ALL RIGHT-- I'M READY TO GET THE FIRE!

LOOK-- A HELICOPTER OUTSIDE THE WINDOW! WE'RE DISCOVERED!

GET HIM-- KILL HIM!

THEY CAN OUTFLY THIS CRATE! ONLY ONE THING CAN STOP THEM-- A SHOTGUN FILLED WITH SILVER PELLETS-- AND THAT'S SOMETHING I ALWAYS CARRY IN THE PLANE FOR EMERGENCIES LIKE THIS!





"AS THE SMOKE CLEARED AWAY..."

THESE SILVER PELLETS DID THE TRICK-- CHANGED THOSE LIVE VAMPIRES INTO DEAD BATS!



THAT'S AS MUCH AS I CAN DO THERE! AND NOW I'VE GOT A FEELING I'D BETTER CHECK UP ON HOW THE EDITOR IS MAKING OUT! SOMETHING TELLS ME THE LEGION OF DEMONS WON'T FORGET HIM!



"AN HOUR LATER-- AT THE EDITOR'S HOME IN THE SUBURBS..."

WEREWOLVES-- SURROUNDING HIS HOUSE! THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO--



STOP-- I'M THE ONE YOU REALLY WANT! I'M ALAN HARTWOOD!

HARTWOOD-- AT LAST!



"AS THEY LEAPED TO ATTACK..."

THIS OUGHT TO GIVE ME A CHANCE TO GET AT THAT ACONTE GRENADE I ALWAYS CARRY WITH ME!

POW!



AGHHH!

BAM!



WHAT WAS THAT NOISE-- WHO'S OUT THERE?

DON'T SHOOT-- IT'S ALAN HARTWOOD! COME ON OVER HERE AND LOOK AT THIS!



DEAD WOLVES!

DEADLY WEREWOLVES JUST A MINUTE AGO! I CAME HERE JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME, AND FOUND THEM ON THE VERGE OF BREAKING INTO YOUR HOUSE TO KILL YOU! I LURED THEM AWAY, AND THEN POLISHED THEM OFF WITH A GRENADE MADE OF ACONITE-- OTHER-WISE KNOWN AS WOLF'S BANE!



HARTWOOD, YOUR MIND MUST HAVE BEEN WARPED BY THE SUPERNATURAL STORIES YOU'VE BEEN TURNING OUT IF YOU THINK I'LL FALL FOR A PRANK LIKE THIS! THROWING STUFFED WOLVES ONTO MY LAWN TO TRY TO MAKE ME BELIEVE THAT MANIACAL STORY ABOUT SATAN'S LEGION OF DEMONS! BUT IT WON'T WORK!

YOU STILL DON'T BELIEVE ME, EH? WELL, COME ON UP TO YOUR OFFICE WITH ME AND I'LL SHOW YOU SOMETHING THAT WILL CONVINCE YOU!

AT THE OFFICE? SO HELP ME, HARTWOOD, IF YOU'VE PULLED ANY STUNT THERE, I'LL TEAR YOUR LIMB FROM LIMB!



SOON-- BACK IN THE OFFICE--

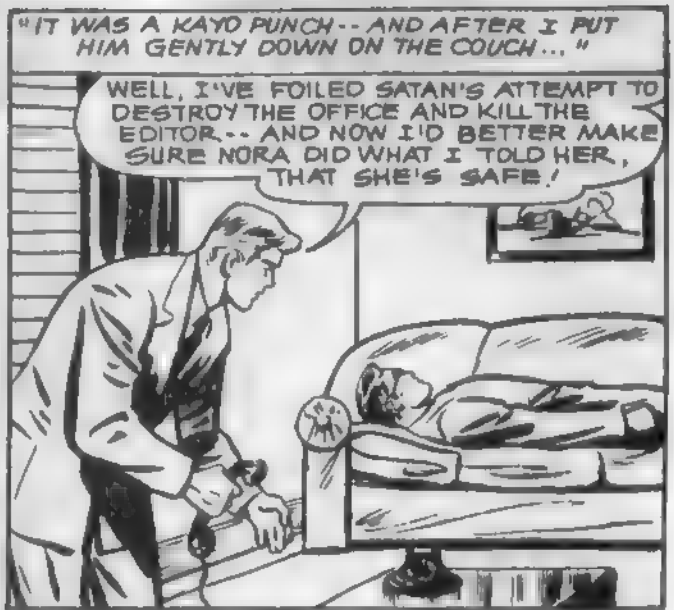
GREAT SCOTT-- THE PLACE IS A SHAMBLES!

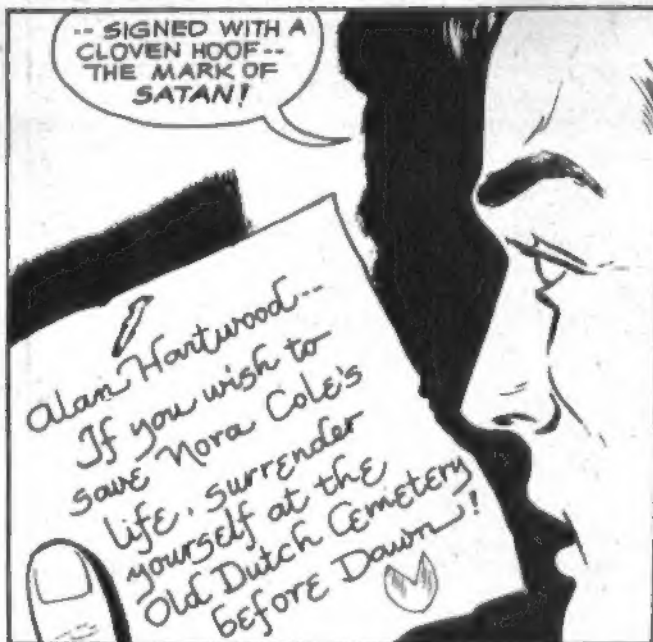
IT WOULD'VE BEEN A LOT WORSE IF I HADN'T STOPPED THE VAMPIRES FROM SETTING FIRE TO IT! THERE ARE THEIR REMAINS NEAR THE WINDOW! THEY'RE JUST ORDINARY DEAD BATS NOW, BECAUSE--

DON'T GIVE ME THAT BALONEY! YOU USED YOUR HELICOPTER TO LAND ON THE ROOF, THEN LOWERED YOURSELF BY ROPE TO THE WINDOW, BROKE IN WITH A SACKFUL OF DEAD BATS-- AND THEN DID THE DIRTY WORK YOURSELF! I'M GOING TO CALL THE POLICE AND HAVE YOU LOCKED UP AS A DANGEROUS MADMAN!

NO--YOU WON'T--







"I HAD NO CHOICE--I HAD TO SAVE NORA'S LIFE! BUT LUCKILY, THERE WAS STILL ENOUGH TIME BEFORE DAWN TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF 'ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN', EXPLAINING ALL..."





"BUT GHOSTS CAN MOVE FAR MORE SWIFTLY THAN HUMANS-- AND THE INEVITABLE OCCURRED! I WAS TRAPPED BY COLD AND HIDEOUS HANDS!"



... and if I don't come back, you'll know I gave my life to save Nora's! you'll hear from me again... because I've learned so many secrets of the Spirit world in writing for "adventures into the unknown," that I'm sure I can become a Ghost Writer!

Just make sure you leave a fresh supply of paper near the office typewriter at night... and I'll continue to write stories of the Supernatural from the world of the Supernatural!

Alan



THE END

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